



REFLECTIONS

January 23, 2011

**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for
and certain of what we do not see.**

Hebrews 11:1

Test of Faith

A brisk wind blew in their faces and angry waves splashed against the bow of the boat. It was a long, uncomfortable ride. Deep into the night, the moon shone brightly in the sky and in its reflection the watchman could see the image of a man walking towards them on the choppy waters. Frightened, the watchman awakened his friends.

When the others also saw someone walking on the lake, they cried in terror, *"It's a ghost."* Then they heard Jesus' calming voice, *"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

Peter called, *"Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water."* Jesus replied, *"Come."* So Peter climbed out of the boat and walked on the water. But then he became afraid and began to sink. *"Lord, save me!"* he cried. Immediately Jesus reached out and caught him. *"You of little faith,"* he said, *"why did you doubt?"*

The story of Jesus walking on the water, taken from Matthew 14, is a familiar one. We attribute the feat to his deity and beyond the ability of any man. But that is not what Jesus said, and it is not what Peter found to be true. Peter met a test of faith. Even if for only a few short steps, he walked on the water.

Nothing is impossible to God, Jesus told us. *"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."* (Matthew 17:20) And we claim to believe it is true. But do we really believe it?

In his book, *Renovation of the Heart*, Dallas Willard observes that we don't believe something by merely *saying* we believe it, or even when we *believe* we believe it. We believe something when we *act* as if it were true.

So, if Jesus came into the world today and found us halted by mountains that seem beyond our ability to climb, might we expect him to say with saddened eyes, *"You of little faith."* And when he finds us seeking security from material possessions instead of trusting God's provision, might He ask, *"Why do you doubt?"*

Each day we find the wind blowing in our faces and angry waves splashing against the bow of the boat. Jesus invites us to leave the safety of the boat and *"Come"* to him. And though Jesus does not promise all we want or even to make the way safe, we know He promises all we need and He promises to be with us always. He was there for Peter. And He is there for you and me.

If we believe it to be true, what more is needed to climb out of the boat?

"You are the light of the world."

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